

BOTSWANA

Date of Elections: 8 September 1984

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the popularly-chosen members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Botswana, the National Assembly, has 39 members: 34 popularly elected, 4 specially elected or co-opted, and the Attorney-General, who sits *ex-officio* without the right to vote. The Speaker is in addition counted as a member if he is elected to this post and was not already a member of the Assembly. The life of the Assembly is 5 years.

Electoral System

All citizens of Botswana who are at least 21 years of age and who have either resided in Botswana for a continuous period of at least 12 months immediately preceding the date on which they apply for registration as voters or who were born in Botswana and are domiciled therein on the date of application are entitled to vote. No person is qualified to be registered as a voter if he is insane, owes allegiance to a foreign State, is under sentence of death or imprisonment of or exceeding six months, or is disqualified under any law relating to offences connected with the elections.

Electoral registers for each constituency are updated every three months by "supplementary rolls"; an amalgated "election roll" is in turn prepared, within each constituency, prior to each election. Voting is not compulsory.

Any qualified elector who is able to speak and read English well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly is qualified to be elected as a member of this House, unless he is an undischarged bankrupt. The parliamentary mandate is considered to be incompatible with membership of the House of Chiefs, certain public offices and an office connected with the elections.

Within his constituency, each candidate to the National Assembly must be nominated by two electors and supported by at least seven others. He must furthermore make a cash deposit which is returned to the candidate if he obtains one-twentieth of the total number of votes cast in his constituency.

For election purposes, Botswana is divided into 34 single-member constituencies. In each, that candidate who obtains the simple majority of the vote is declared elected.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary seats which become vacant between general elections.

General Considerations **and** Conduct of the Elections

Parliament was dissolved on 20 July 1984 by President of the Republic Quett Masire. The election date was announced on 11 August 1984.

Six political parties contested the newly-enlarged National Assembly's 34 directly-elected constituency seats; besides the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), these included the Botswana National Front (BNF), the Botswana People's Party (BPP) and three others. Campaign issues focused on economic questions, particularly the adverse repercussions on the country's diamond industry caused by drought and recession, as well as on regional affairs.

On polling day, the conservative BDP - in power since independence in 1966 - was once again victorious, capturing 29 seats. A slightly rearranged Cabinet was announced on 14 September.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Number of registered electors		300,000 (approx.)	
Voters		76% (approx.)	
Valid votes		227,756	
Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats of Popularly-Elected Members
Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)	54,863	68.0	» (-)
Botswana National Front (BNF)	46,550	20.4	4 (+ 2)
Botswana People's Party (BPP)	14,961	6.6	K =)
Others	11,382	5.0	—
			34*

•Two seats added since last elections.

2. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

Men	37
Women	2
	39